



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

PRESS RELEASE

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PASSING OF HONORABLE FLORENCE M. COOPER,
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE,
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

The United States District Court for the Central District of California regrets to announce the passing of Judge Florence-Marie Cooper, who died this morning at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, California. Judge Cooper, who spent her entire career in public service, was appointed to the office of United States District Judge on November 15, 1999. After graduating magna cum laude from Whittier College School of Law in 1975, she served as a law clerk to the Honorable Arthur Alarcón, in the appellate department of the Los Angeles Superior Court, from 1975-1977. After a short time as a deputy city attorney for the City of Los Angeles, she returned to work for Justice Alarcón in 1978 as a senior research attorney for the California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District. She stayed at the Court of Appeal until 1983, working for Justice Arleigh M. Woods after Justice Alarcón was appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In 1983, Judge Cooper became a commissioner for the Los Angeles Superior Court, a position she held until 1990, when she became a judge of the Los Angeles

Municipal Court. She also served as an adjunct professor of law at San Fernando Valley College School of Law from 1980-1985. From 1991 to 1999, when she was nominated to the federal bench by President Clinton, she was a judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court. She served tirelessly as a judge of the Central District of California from November of 1999 until her final illness, just two months shy of her planned retirement in March 2010.

Judge Cooper was the recipient of several awards by the legal community, including the Outstanding Jurist Award from the L.A. County Bar Association in 1999. She was named Judge of the Year by the Criminal Courts Bar Association, the Century City Bar Association, L.A. Women Lawyers, and the Criminal Justice Section of the L.A. County Bar. In 2000, she was the recipient of the Golden Mike Award from the Radio and Television News Broadcasters Association. In 2005, 2007 and 2008, the *Daily Journal* named her one of the 100 most influential people in California.

On behalf of the California Judicial Council, Judge Cooper served on the Jury Instruction Task Force, the Criminal Advisory Committee, Cameras in the Court Task Force, and was Chair of the Three Strikes Study Committee. She has been active in the L.A. County Bar Association on the Executive Committee, Litigation Section. She has been the Chair of the Media Committee for the L.A. Superior Court, former Chair of the Bench & Bar Committee for the L.A. Superior Court. She is a former member of the Caljic Committee and the California Judges Association Executive Board. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers, and the Federal Bar Association, and serves on the Advisory Board of the L.A. Commission on Assaults Against Women. At the time of her death, she was serving on the Executive Committee of the Central District Court.

In addition, Judge Cooper has an extensive teaching background and served for many years on the faculty of the California Judicial College, Berkeley, the California Continuing Judicial Studies Program, National Judicial College, and the University of LaVerne College of Law.

Upon learning of Judge Cooper's death this morning, Chief Judge Audrey B. Collins of the Central District issued the following statement:

"Our court is devastated by this loss. It is hard to measure the extent of this loss to her family, her friends and colleagues on both the state court and our federal bench, to the legal community, and the greater Los Angeles community. Florence was everyone's friend -- warm, caring, generous, and always ready to

help with legal or non-legal issues.

“To her chambers staff, she was a legal mentor and a second mother; to her fellow judges, as well as lawyers practicing civil and criminal law, Florence personified the best qualities one could hope for in a federal judge -- intelligence, analytical reasoning, and endless patience, combined with fairness, the unwavering ability to recognize and correct injustice to the individual, and a passion for justice.

“Above all this, she was everything we could hope for in a colleague and a friend -- funny, loyal, someone to count on through the good days and the bad days. Her loss leaves an unfillable void.”

Funeral arrangements are pending.

TERRY NAFISI, DISTRICT COURT EXECUTIVE